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114,000 EMPTY SEATS

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San Francisco Public Library

Government Information Center
San Francisco Public Library
100 Larkin Street, 5th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94102

REFERENCE BOOK

Not to be taken from the Library

test"

900 vehicles
by 5:00 p.m.
for evening
peak



700 vehicles
for normal
operation



625
vehicles
by 7:00 a.m.
for morning
peak



255 vehicles
at 6:00 a.m.
on night work.

For instance, the total number of vehicles in service throughout the city before 6:00 a.m. is about 275. Between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m., however, this is increased to 625 to handle the morning rush.

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114,000 EMPTY SEATS

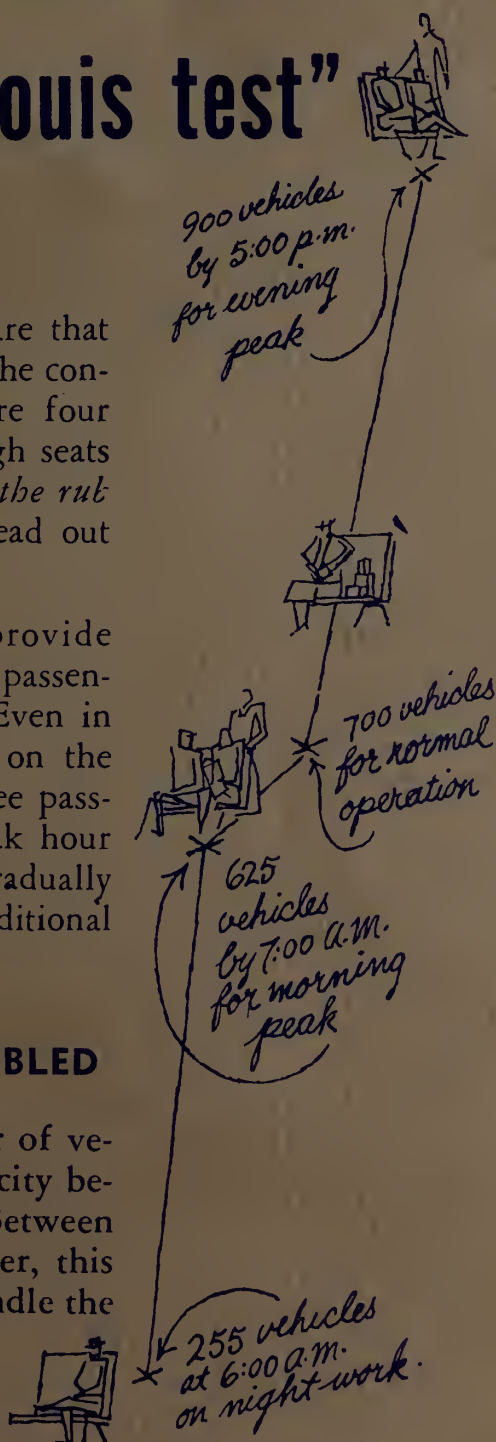
and the "St. Louis test"

Most of our patrons are unaware that there are over 50% more seats on the converted lines today than there were four years ago. In fact, there are enough seats for every single rider—and *here's the rub*—if the traffic load could be spread out evenly during the day!

Transit schedules generally provide about as many seats as there are passengers, except during rush hours. Even in these periods of heaviest riding, on the average more than two out of three passengers are seated. Of course, peak hour passenger demands are met by gradually placing into service hundreds of additional vehicles on all lines.

PEAK HOUR SERVICE TREBLED

For instance, the total number of vehicles in service throughout the city before 6:00 a.m. is about 275. Between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m., however, this number is increased to 625 to handle the morning rush.



This general picture is equally true of the evening peak period when the 700 vehicles in operation during the afternoon are suddenly jumped to a total Railway strength of 900 streetcars, buses, and cable cars.

Your Railway would like nothing better than to be able to provide seats for everyone all the time. Your comfort and goodwill mean added revenue thus reducing the cost of Railway operation. Unfortunately, the city's congested downtown traffic situation and the severe rush hour loads make seats for everyone impossible at these hours.



1 SEAT = 1 PASSENGER?

While it is common practice in the transit industry to schedule trips to provide an average of one seat per passenger in the direction of major travel during off-peak periods (10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.) it does not necessarily mean that every passenger will have a seat. Even a small delay in service may mean standees on some units and seats a'begging on others.

During rush hours it is not economically feasible to furnish a seat for everyone, even if it were practicable.

THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED

To provide seats for everyone at peak hours would require hundreds more vehicles, hundreds more operators, at a cost of thousands of dollars daily. And even if these extra vehicles were available the sad fact remains that there is not enough space on the streets for all this extra equipment at the peak periods.

Common practice in the industry, therefore, is to furnish on an average of 100 seats for every 125 to 175 passengers.

We know you will be surprised to learn that the Municipal Railway provides an average of over 114,000 more seat trips daily than it has patrons! In other words, there are a total of 114,000 empty seats on Railway

vehicles each day that are not occupied from one end of the route to the other.

EVER SEEN 114,000 VACANT SEATS? WELL, IF YOU STRUNG BUSES AND STREETCARS TOGETHER, BUMPER TO BUMPER, YOU WOULD HAVE A LINE OF VEHICLES STRETCHING FROM THE FERRY BUILDING OUT TO THE BEACH, BACK TO THE FERRY BUILDING AGAIN AND STILL HAVE FOUR OR FIVE MILES LEFT OVER!

**19 MILES
OF EMPTY
SEATS**



Of course these lonely seats are small comfort to those who must use the Railway during the peak periods. We believe that many of our patrons actually have never ridden on one of our vehicles except during the rush hours!

10 TO 3 SHOP CAREFREE

This, however, does offer a helpful suggestion to those passengers who do have some leeway in the times they go places — it suggests they do their bus traveling when traffic is the lightest and seats are most plentiful. This is generally between 10 in the morning and 3 in the afternoon.

Even during off-peak periods, though, we receive a certain amount of criticism about "the service." Almost any transit executive is sure to encounter the comment, "The trouble with you guys is you cut your schedules too thin. Put on more streetcars and buses, step up your service. You'll get more riders and the revenue will take care of itself."

THE "ST. LOUIS TEST"

Well, this advice had always stemmed more from theory than fact as no major transit property in the United States, until recently, had ever really given the idea a scientific "in-the-field" test. Nobody, that is, until at the suggestion of the St. Louis Mayor's Mass Transportation Committee, the local transit company conducted a rigidly supervised 90-day experiment on four of its lines to actually determine the

practical effects of greatly improved service frequency during the daily off-peak period.

Once and for all the St. Louis officials figured they would get the real answers on what happens—in terms of increased riders versus increased costs—when the service is generously padded to allow for any conceivable load factor.

RESULTS

Service frequency on the four lines involved (all with high riding potentials, incidentally) was just about doubled.

SERVICE FREQUENCY	REVENUE	EXPENSE
Line 1 from 30 min. to 15 min.	AVERAGE	AVERAGE
Line 2 from 20 min. to 10 min.	8%	100%
Line 3 from 10 min. to 5 min.		
Line 4 from 9 min. to 5 min.	INCREASE	INCREASE

THEORY DISPROVED

Although the experiment was given the widest possible publicity through the press, radio and other media, even including door to door personal calls in the districts involved, the small additional revenue generated covered only a fraction of the considerable cost involved in the test. Increase in mid-day revenue barely averaged 8% while operating costs for the same period almost doubled.

"It is evident," declares the St. Louis report, "that despite the favorable conditions of this trial, additional transit riding cannot be stimulated, except to a very limited degree, by an increase in the amount of service provided. In this experiment the resulting increase in riding fell far short of covering the additional operating costs."

The report concludes, "The service must be tailored to fit actual riding demands."



If you have found this information concerning your transit system of interest may we ask you to pass it on to a friend who might also welcome this explanation of one phase of the operation of the Municipal Railway? Thank you.

Public Utilities Commission